

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L MUNICH 1985

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: BUDESTAG ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN BAVARIA: A PRELIMINARY
EVALUATION

1. SUMMARY: BAVARIA'S DOMINANT POLITICAL FORCE, THE CSU,
IS LIKELY TO WIN SOLID MAJORITY OF POPULAR VOTES IN BUNDESTAG
ELECTIONS HERE. NEITHER SPD NOR FDP IS LIKELY TO INCREASE
PERCENTAGE OF VOTES IT OBTAINED IN 1972 ELECTIONS, AND SPD
MAY WELL LOSE GROUND. BIG CSU VICTORY, WHICH IS CONCEIVABLE,
COULD ENHANCE CDU/CSU'S SLIM PROSPECTS OF UNSEATING PRESENT
COALITION. END SUMMARY.

2. THE "HEISSE PHASE" OF THE OCTOBER 3 BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS
GETS UNDERWAY HERE SEPTEMBER 4 WHEN THE MAJOR PARTIES STAGE
IMPORTANT RALLIES IN MUNICH AREA. THIS MESSAGE REPRESENTS
CONGEN READING OF PRESENT COMPLEXION OF CAMPAIGN IN BAVARIA.

3. OVERVIEW. ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT CHRISTIAN SOCIAL UNION
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(CSU) WILL REMAIN THE DOMINANT FORCE IN BAVARIAN POLITICAL LIFE.

LED BY FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS, THE ONLY CHARISMATIC LEADER PRESENTLY ON BAVARIAN SCENE, CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH SENSE OF "BAVARIAN-NESS" FELT BY MAJORITY OF VOTERS HERE, AND BETTER ORGANIZED AND FINANCED THAN ITS OPPONENTS, CSU SEEMS CERTAIN TO WIN SOLID MAJORITY OF POPULAR VOTE. BARRING UNFORESEEN DEVELOPMENTS, SUCH AS SOME DRAMATIC ALLEGATION CONCERNING STRAUSS AND LOCKHEED, CSU WILL PROBABLY ADD AT LEAST ONE AND PERHAPS SEVERAL PERCENTAGE POINTS TO 55.1 PERCENT OF VOTE IT WON IN 1972 BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS.

SPLIT BETWEEN RIGHT-MODERATE FORCES OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (SPD), ON ONE HAND, AND MUNICH JUSOS AND THEIR ALLIES ON OTHER, HAS BEEN PAPERED OVER, BUT SPD IS OFF TO SLOW, LACKLUSTER START HERE. AT PRESENT IT LOOKS AS IF SPD WILL BE VERY HARD PUT TO MINIMIZE SLIPPAGE FROM THE 37.8 PERCENT OF POPULAR VOTE IT GARNERED IN 1972.

FREE DEMOCRATIC PARTY (FDP), WHICH IS EAK IN BAVARIA, HAS JUST BEGUN TO MOUNT BAVARIA-WIDE CAMPAIGN. WE ARE SKEPTICAL THAT IT WILL BE ABLE TO INCREASE SIGNIFICANTLY ITS 6.1 PERCENT SHARE OF VOTES IN 1972.

4. ISSUES, THEMES AND SLOGANS.

(A) CSU. BASIC CSU CAMPAING THEME, AS EPITOMIZED BY SLOGAN "FREEDOM OR SOCIALISM", IS DANGER OF GRADUAL SLIDE INTO MARXIST SOCIALISM FROM WITHIN AND CONTINUING MENACE OF SOVIET UNION AND ALLIES FROM WITHOUT. DANGER WHICH "VOLKSFRANT EUROPE" WOULD POSE AND ALLEGED FAILURE OF COALITION'S "OST-POLITIK" AND "DEUTSCHLANDPOLITIK" ARE LIKELY TO BE IMPORTANT CSU ISSUES. ALLEGED MISMANAGEMENT OF ECONOMY SINCE 1969, NEED FOR CONTINUED VIGILANCE IN EMPLOYMENT OF RADICALS IN PUBLIC SERVICE -- PARTICULARLY AS SCHOOL TEACHERS, AND POTENTIALLY PRECARIOUS FINANCIAL SITUATION OF PENSION FUNDS IN DECADE OF 1980'S WILL BE SIGNIFICANT SECONDARY ISSUES.

(B) SPD. SPD HERE HAS NO RPT NO EXPLICIT OVERALL THEME, BUT MAIN THRUST OF ITS CAMPAINGN IS "YOU'VE NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD." SOME SPD POSTERS AND LITERATURE FOCUS ON "MODEL GERMANY" THEME AND EMPHASIZE ACHIEVEMENTS OF COALITION. OTHER LITERATURE IS SOMEWHAT DEFENSIVE IN TONE, STRESSING THAT SPD HAS ALWAYS

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BEEN FIRM CHAMPION OF FREEDOM. SOMEWHAT SURPRISINGLY, SPD HERE HAS NOT GONE ALL OUT TO CAPITALIZE ON WHAT SEEMS TO BE ITS STRONGEST ASSET: THE PERSONALITY AND PROVEN LEADERSHIP ABILITY OF CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT. (GROUP OF LOCAL LABOR LEADERS CALLING THEMSELVES "VOTER INITIATIVE OF MUNICH WORKERS" HAS TAKEN UP SOME LF SLACK BY BLANKETING PARTS OF MUNICH WITH COLOR POSTERS FEATURING SCHMIDT AND DOWNPLAYING SPD.) THEME OF DANGER OF RETURN TO COLD WAR AND CONCOMITANT ISOLATION OF FRG IN EE IN

EVENT CDU/CSU AND STRAUSS SHOULD COME TO POWER HAS BEEN SOUNDED IN PRIVATE BY SPD PEOPLE HERE. AS CAMPAIGN GOES ON, WE EXPECT TO HEAR MORE OF THIS THEME TOGETHER WITH INCREASED EMPHASIS ON DANGER POSED BY THE "BRILLIANT BUT ERRATIC" STRAUSS. SPD ATTEMPT TO MAKE POINTS WITH WOMEN VOTERS BY CRITICIZING CSU STANCE ON ABORTION ISSUE SEEMS TO HAVE FIZZLED.

(C) FDP. FDP CAMPAIGN, WHICH IS NOTICEABLY WEAKER THAN CSU AND SPD EFFORTS, FEATURES SLOGAN OF "STRENGTHEN THE LIBERALS IN BONN." ALTHOUGH FDP ATTEMPTS TO APPEAL TO VOTERS ON SUCH POSITIVE GROUNDS AS MINAGR ERTL'S EXPERTISE IN FARMING (ERTL APPEARS TO RETAIN SOME FOLLOWING AMONG FARMERS HERE) AND FINE PERFORMANCE OF FDP MINISTERS GENSCHER, FRIDERICHs ET AL, FDP HAS ESSENTIALLY NEGATIVE APPEAL, ATTRACTING VOTERS WHO ARE RELUCTANT TO VOTE FOR EITHER SPD OR CSU. IN ADDITION TO TOUTING COALITION'S RECORD, FDP HAS BEEN ATTACKING STRAUSS AND THE MUNICH JUSOS FDP LINE IS THAT FDP MEMBERS OF COALITION CABINET HAVE PREVENTED JUSOS AND THEIR ILK FROM FORCING SPD LEADERS TO ADOPT SUCH ALLEGEDLY RADICAL PROGRAMS AS "INVESTITIONSLENKUNG" (INVESTMENT CONTROL).

5. SPLINTER PARTIES. ALTHOUGH DKP AND AVP (AKTIONS-GEMEINSCHAFT VIERTE PARTEI) HAVE PLASTERED POSTERS ALL OVER MUNICH AND OTHER LARGER CITIES, NEITHER IS EXPECTED TO WIN EVEN 1 PER CENT OF VOTE.

6. COMMENT: THIS EVALUATION IS HAMPERED BY UNAVAILABILITY AS YET OF RELIABLE POLLING DATA ON BAVARIA. LANDSLIDE VICTORY OF CSU OF MAGNITUDE OF 58 PERCENT OF POPULAR VOTE COULD BE IN OFFING. IF SO, UNION PARTIES' SLIM CHANCES OF UNSEATING PRESENT COALITION COULD BE ENHANCED.
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